

A Pretty Great State

With a high job growth rate and a low unemployment rate, many are making Utah their home.

It comes as no surprise to Utahns that our state is a pretty great place to live. From wonderful skiing to a strong pioneer culture, Utah caters to almost every desire and whim of residents and travelers alike. Perhaps more alluring though, is the state's strong and growing economy. With one of the highest job growth rates in the nation and a very low unemployment rate, it isn't surprising that people here and abroad would seek to make Utah their home.

Indeed, data from a number of sources appears to back up that assertion. The Governor's Office of Planning and Budget publishes population estimates on a yearly basis. These estimates touch on nearly every aspect of population dynamics: births, deaths, and net migration. This net migration data, which shows us the inflow

of people into the state minus the outflow, shows that 2005 had the highest number of net migrants since 1943. This comes on the heels of strong and sustained in-migration throughout the 1990s.

A wholly separate look at migration and immigration comes to us from the American Community Survey (ACS). Data for 2005 shows that roughly 95,000 people in Utah lived elsewhere in the previous year—we must remember this is only a measure of the flow into the state, not a measure of net in-migration. While much is made of international immigrants coming

to Utah, the data shows that nearly 86 percent of those who came to the state were from other U.S. states or territories. The remainder came from a number of international locations, but no single area dominated—Mexico, Latin America minus Mexico, Canada, and Asia accounted for three percent each.

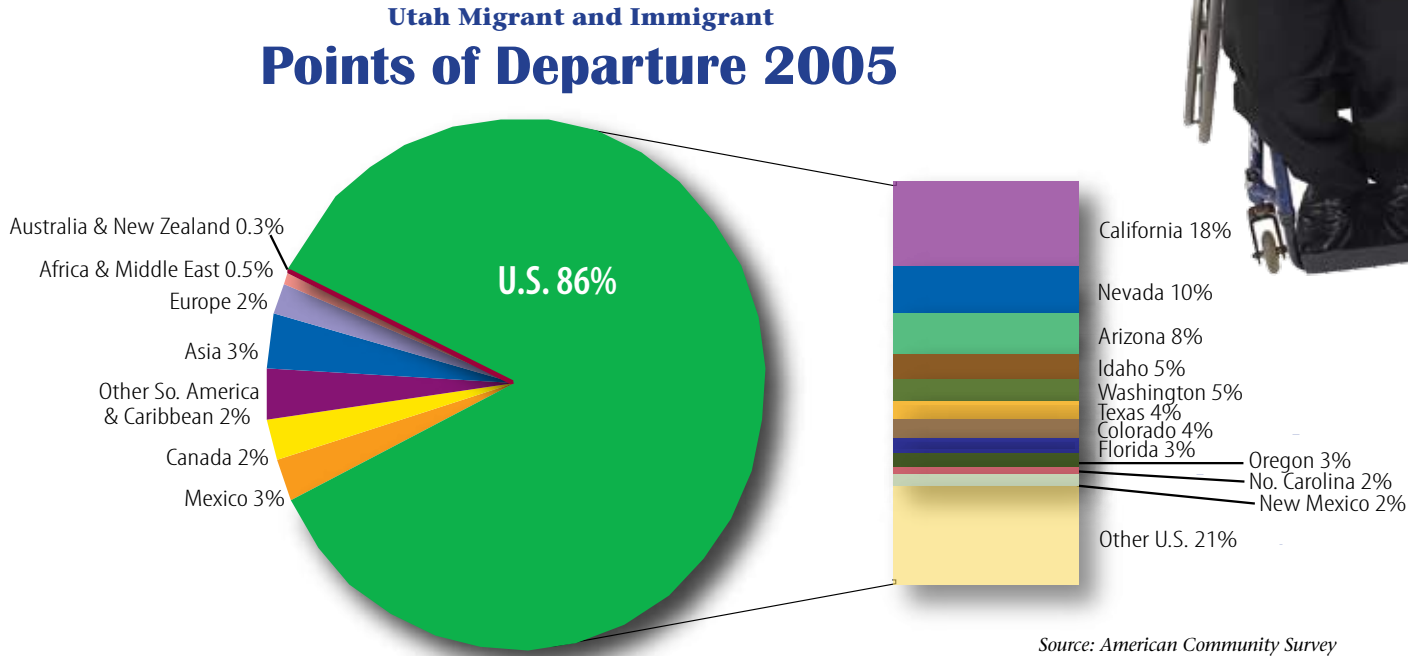
Further examination of the ACS data reveals many interesting characteristics of both groups who have come to Utah. One aspect in which these two groups show a striking difference is in terms of their gender makeup. Domestic migrants split roughly 50-50 percentage-wise between men and women, whereas international immigrants split 60-40 in favor of men. This difference

may suggest that more men are coming from outside the country in search of work or education, leaving their families at home. This difference is perhaps further visible in the age distribution of migrants and immigrants. Roughly 44 percent of domestic migrants are in the 20-to-34 age group. On the other hand, fully 49 percent of all international immigrants are in the 20-to-24 age group. This large concentration also reveals something else—just how hard it is to pick up and move to a completely new country. You have to be fairly young and flexible to make such a transition. Furthermore, college students coming to Utah from afar would also tend to bulk up this age group.

Another comparison that is often made of domestic migrants and international immigrants is that of educational attainment. Here the ACS data shows differences between the two groups. Both are unique in their own way. Fully 94 percent of domestic migrants, ages 25 years and

older, had at least a high school diploma and 35 percent had at least a bachelor's degree—both statistics exceed Utah's overall educational attainment levels. In this regard, domestic migrants are highly educated and are immediately adding to the state's bank of human capital. People from abroad also showed a strong inclination to higher education, with 74 percent of those 25 years and older having at least a high school diploma and 26 percent having at least a bachelor's degree. These slightly lower percentages likely reflect a mixed composition of students seeking higher education and less-educated workers seeking employment opportunities.

Migration and immigration dynamics are a fascinating topic and are an important component of any labor market analysis. Thanks to the ACS we will be able to probe this phenomenon in a timelier manner and with a greater level of detail than ever before.



Source: American Community Survey

Migration and Immigration by Educational Attainment

	High School Diploma or Higher	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Domestic Migrants	94%	35%
International Immigrants	74%	26%

Migration and Immigration by Gender

	Male	Female
Domestic Migrants	51%	49%
International Immigrants	60%	40%

Migration and Immigration by Age

	15 and below	16-19	20-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 and above
Domestic Migrants	19%	7%	20%	24%	14%	5%	6%	5%
International Immigrants	5%	7%	49%	14%	11%	4%	6%	4%

Source for tables: American Community Survey